

## **Minutes**

### **Work Session**

**African American Heritage Commission  
of Asheville and Buncombe County  
September 11, 2014  
161 S Charlotte St, Room A109**

Members Present: Sasha Mitchell, Jan Goffney, Phyllis Utley, Isaac Coleman, Al Whitesides, Marvin Chambers, Johnnie Grant

Members Absent: Angel Redmond, Desmond McAfee

Council Liaison: Councilman Chris Pelly

Staff: Roderick Simmons, Steve Garrison, Mark Halstead, Alex Carmichael

Chairwoman Grant called the meeting to order at 11:36 PM and began with a moment of silence to honor the victims of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. Ms. Grant welcomed Al Whitesides to the Commission.

#### **1. New Business:**

##### **a. Strategic Plan Work Session** – Roderick Simmons, Director of Asheville Parks and Recreation

Mr. Simmons facilitated a discussion the goals, services, and work plan of the Commission.

##### Goals:

The Commission seeks to:

- *Increase the social, political, and economic value of African American heritage.*
- *Encourage and demonstrate respectful engagement with all cultures in Buncombe County.*
- *Encourage the documentation of African American heritage.*
- *Institutionalize African American heritage as an ongoing goal of preservation.*
- *Explore every area of Buncombe County for African American contributions.*

##### Services:

The Commission will accomplish its goals by:

- *Providing advice and technical information – in partnership with local, regional, state, and national organizations – to individuals and groups who want to preserve historic African American places;*
- *Encouraging and supporting the listing of local African American historic sites in the National Register of Historic Places and the placement of Historical Markers to recognize and interpret places important in African American history;*
- *Promoting the infusion of African American history into the curriculum of public schools through a partnership with the local school systems and charter schools and the North Carolina Department of Education;*
- *Providing a forum for people interested in preserving African American heritage to learn what is happening locally, nationally, and internationally, to share success stories, and to receive technical information through meetings and workshops; and*
- *Collaborating with other organizations and agencies to encourage the preservation of Asheville and Buncombe County African American history and culture.*

Work Plan:

1. Develop an Historical Marker Program.
2. Conduct public relations and community outreach through traditional and online media highlighting news about and people involved with African American historic preservation in the County.
3. Develop a plan for an annual African American Conference/Workshop.
4. Develop a Preserving Our Places in History Award(s).
5. Host an annual community forum to discuss efforts to preserve the legacy of the African American presence in Buncombe County.
6. Conduct a Needs Assessment of the African American community in Asheville and Buncombe County.

To implement the work plan, Chairwoman Grant designated committees to focus on specific issues:

Education Committee: Jan Goffney, Isaac Coleman, Al Whitesides

Public Relations Committee: Johnnie Grant, Sasha Mitchell, Marvin Chambers

Community Outreach Committee: Sasha Mitchell, Angel Redmond, Desmond McAfee

Historical Marker Committee: Marvin Chambers, Johnnie Grant, Sasha Mitchell

5. **Public Comment:**

- a. Sasha Mitchell informed the group that the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission would meet

The next meeting will be 10/09/14.